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NEWSLETTER

101-1253

5 April 1990

Washington, D C

I LIKE IKE. Recently at a joint meeting of Congress tribute was paid to the late 34th President of the United States, Dwight David Eisenhower, or as he was better known "Ike." The meeting officially kicked-off a series of celebrations planned this year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the former President's birth.

As Commander of the Western allies in Europe during World War II it was under his charge that much of Europe was liberated. Dwight D Eisenhower was a great General, a good President and a great leader during very troubled times. He could be paid no better tribute than the recent developments which have taken place in Eastern Europe seeing various peoples emerge as free nations from decades of occupation.

To this I want to add our state should be quite proud. Few remember, but this former President hails from Texas, and in fact was born 14 October 1890 in Denison.

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A NEW TREASURE. On 24 March I had the pleasure of attending the Hidalgo County Historical Museum's Annual Heritage Associates Ranch Gala fundraiser and presenting the museum with one of the silver Bicentennial of the United States Congress Coins commemorating the 200th anniversary of Congress (1789 - 1989). I had personally struck this coin in front of the U S Capitol in June 1989 during the official First Strike Ceremony.

This was the first time since 1979 that official U S coins have been struck outside a U S Mint facility. This particular press, in fact, was transported from the Philadelphia Mint.

The major elements featured on the coins -- the Capitol Dome, the Statue of Freedom, the Old Senate Eagle and the Mace of the House of Representatives -- are all historic and recognizable symbols of Congress. While the coin remains the property of the U S Government it will stay with the Hidalgo County Historical Museum on a permanent loan basis. And I have to say it is a magnificent keepsake of which the museum can be proud to have among its displays. Do go by the museum to see this and do remember how significant donations are to keeping such operations running.

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PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC FITNESS AWARDS. All public and private schools are invited to participate in the Presidential Academic Fitness Awards program. This was established in 1983 to honor students for outstanding academic achievement. Awards are presented at three levels to students graduating from elementary, middle or junior high, and senior high school. Students must fulfill all criteria listed below to qualify for these awards:

* **GRADE POINT AVERAGE.** An overall B+ average. This average is composed of all years in the school including the fall semester of the graduating grade. A B+ is equivalent to a 3.3 on a 4 point scale or 85 on a 100 point scale. Elementary schools should not include grades K-3 in this average.

* **TEST SCORES.** Standardized achievement test battery scores should be at the 80th percentile. The battery must be from the current or preceding academic year and include **both** verbal and mathematical skills. Nationally standardized college admissions examinations, such as the SAT or ACT, may be used for the high school award.

* **COURSES IN NEW BASICS (High School Seniors Only).** The senior must complete by graduation at least 12 high school or higher level course units distributed among the "New Basics," which includes English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and computer sciences. Credits are not required in each of the "New Basics."

* **EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT AWARD.** These awards are optional and given at the principal's discretion to a limited number of students who do not meet all the academic criteria, but whom the principal wishes to recognize for extraordinary effort. These special awards may be presented to no more than 10% of the number of students who meet all the academic criteria for the award.

Beautifully embossed certificates are provided by the U S Department of Education at no cost to the schools. In addition, PAFA pins are now available from the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals at a special price of \$1.00 per pin. For more information on the PAFA program, contact your local school principal or write to: Presidential Academic Fitness Awards, U S Department of Education, Washington, D C 20202.

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THE LIVING GIFT OF LIFE. There is a new program I want to share with you. It's the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

Donating bone marrow has been called the living gift of life because the donor gives marrow (which replenishes itself easily) to a fatally ill patient whose only chance for life is a marrow transplant. This is a relatively new but preferred treatment for leukemia and other blood disorders which, when successful, is a **cure**.

The procedure, however, is one which requires very precise tissue, or "HLA," matching the donor and the recipient. In fact, the typing is so critical that the chances of finding a matched donor are about one in 20,000. That is why this effort is so important.

Prior to the establishment of the national registry, doctors treating patients in need of a transplant had to make hundreds of calls to individual blood banks and hospitals in search of a potential donor. In most cases, the search was futile or took so long that the patient, with the fatal illness, was no longer strong enough to undergo a transplant.

The future success of the program depends on the ability to recruit potential donors who are willing to give a blood sample for HLA typing and to be listed in the registry. The goal is a pool of more than 250,000 Americans and one million volunteers worldwide.

If you would like more information about this exciting effort you can call **LIFESAVERS** at the following toll-free number: 1-800-950-1050. You can also feel free to contact my office here in Washington. Remember, many are still waiting for the stranger who can give a special gift. It may be you.

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VISITORS FROM HOME. W E Robbs, Jr, of George West; Neil Haman, of Harlingen; and Richard Tarver of San Benito.

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